



FY 2004 Budget Request



National Marine Fisheries Service

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 budget request for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries) totals \$737.9 million, including \$620.9 million for its research, management, and enforcement programs, and \$117.0 million in other accounts. The requested funding would provide critical new resources to improve NOAA Fisheries' ability to ensure the long-term stewardship of the Nation's living marine resources.

FY 2004 PROGRAM CHANGES

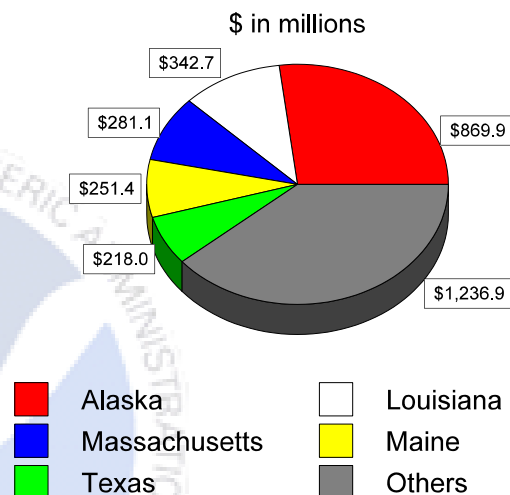
Overall, \$15.9 million in new resources (offset by \$1.8 million in reductions) are requested under an integrated NOAA-wide Ecosystem Forecasting and Management Initiative. Included in the request under this Initiative is \$11.8 million in new funding for science programs and \$5.8 million for management activities. NOAA also requests increases of \$33.3 million for NOAA Fisheries-related investments within the Infrastructure, Maintenance, Safety, and Human Capital Initiative.

ECOSYSTEM FORECASTING AND MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

The NOAA Ecosystem Forecasting and Management Initiative continues a long-term commitment to improve NOAA Fisheries' structure, processes, and business approaches. Through this Initiative, NOAA proposes expansion of NOAA Fisheries science and management activities to better incorporate ecosystem considerations into its stewardship policies.

A primary goal is to maintain and enhance the economic viability and jobs that commercial and recreational fishing and other industries provide to the Nation. In 2001, the U.S. commercial fishing industry landed an estimated 9.5 billion pounds valued at \$3.2 billion. This contributed an estimated

Value of Landings - 2001

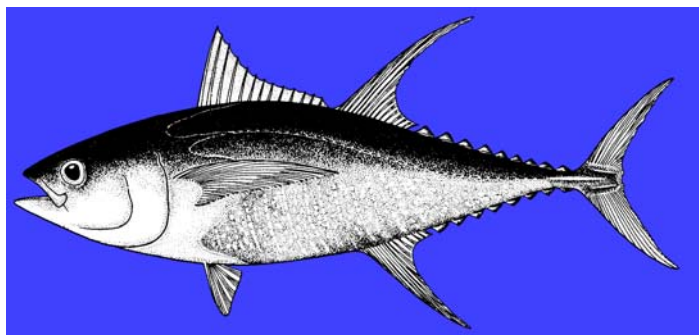


\$28.6 billion (in value added) to the Gross National Product in 2001. The recreational fishing sector harvested another 262.4 million fish, took over 84 million fishing trips, and generated over \$20 billion in annual expenditures.

To meet these challenges, NOAA Fisheries proposes new investments in its research and management programs.

Improving Science and Research Programs

An increase of \$11.8 million (along with \$1.5 million in decreases) is requested to modernize and expand the scope of NOAA Fisheries research capabilities. As the agency implements measures to rebuild and sustain marine fisheries, conserve essential fish habitat, reduce bycatch, and improve the economic viability and jobs involving fishing and other uses of marine resources, the demands on current scientific resources are enormous. These additional funds are essential to improve the collection, analysis, and modeling of comprehensive biological, environmental, and economic data on an increasing number of species. The request includes an increase \$3.0 million to expand stock assessments to more adequately assess fish stocks around the country, thereby reducing the number of stocks with an unknown population status. For the first time, NOAA Fisheries is requesting funds for research specifically related to climate regimes and ecosystem productivity. This \$2.0 million will be used to improve the understanding and prediction of climate change on major U.S. marine and coastal ecosystems.



Funding of \$3.0 million is requested to provide additional observers within the New England groundfish fishery to meet additional monitoring requirements resulting from a court settlement. An increase of \$2.0 million is proposed to meet a court-ordered timeline to conduct Endangered Species Act section 7 consultations on pesticides with the Environmental Protection Agency in California and Washington State. Funding of \$220,000 is included for improved consideration of the social and economic impacts of fishery management decisions, which is critical to the long-term sustainability of living marine resources and the economic health of our coastal communities. Finally, \$1.6 million is requested to meet the research, monitoring, and evaluation of salmon stocks and habitat requirements under the Columbia River Power System biological opinion and Basinwide Recovery Strategy.

Management for the Future

An additional \$5.8 million (along with a reduction of \$250,000) is requested to modernize NOAA Fisheries' management programs. As observed a report by the National Academy of Public Administration, in order for NOAA Fisheries to meet its stewardship responsibilities it must expand and refine its management processes, and allow the full benefits of sustained resources to be realized. To begin modernizing its business processes, NOAA Fisheries is proposing \$1.5 million increase to improve the efficiency and responsiveness of the regulatory process its



Regional Offices. Through better assessments of environmental and socioeconomic impacts and costs and benefits of implementing various conservation programs for protected species can be realized. Funds are provided specifically to expand the agency's ability to meet its statutory and regulatory requirements. A proposed increase of \$1.5 million will improve and increase its regulatory processing capacity in its Regional Offices.

To address Nation-wide concerns with the bycatch of non-target species during fishing operations, \$2.8 million is requested. This funding will be used to examine existing and new bycatch reduction methods, expand public/private



gear research and testing, and collect additional information on bycatch rates through observers. Finally, \$1.5 million in management funding (in addition to the \$1.6 million for research) is requested to ensure full implementation of the requirements of the Columbia River Power System biological opinion and Basinwide Recovery Strategy. These funds would allow NOAA Fisheries to promote subbasin planning, enhance salmon recovery planning, and review passage and screening enhancements in priority watersheds.

INFRASTRUCTURE, MAINTENANCE, SAFETY, AND HUMAN CAPITAL INITIATIVE

The request includes \$12.3 million for adjustments-to-base that are critical to preserve and develop our greatest asset — NOAA Fisheries' human capital. A transfer from NOAA to NOAA Fisheries is proposed for current funding of \$7.0 million associated with agency attorneys.

Enhancing our scientific understanding of the Nation's living marine resources also requires an investment in the repair and replacement of our laboratories. The request seeks \$2.0 million for the rehabilitation of critically needed research facilities in Galveston, Texas. Continued funding of \$12.0 million is requested for the development of replacement research facilities in Honolulu, Hawaii.

FY 2004 TERMINATIONS

Programs proposed for termination include: Science and Technology funding (\$1.5 million); New Hampshire Fish & Game enforcement vessel (\$250,000); and Northern & Southern Funds of the Pacific Salmon Treaty (\$20 million) funding.



For more information, please contact NOAA's Office of Legislative Affairs at 202-482-4981.
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